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SUBJECT: GERMANY H1N1 FLU UPDATE: 3 CONFIRMED, SEVERAL NEW
SUSPICIOUS CASES - CORRECTED COPY

REF: Berlin 488

1. (SBU) Summary: The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) confirmed today three cases of Influenza-A-Virus A/H1N1 in Germany. Two of the cases were reportedly confirmed in Bavaria and one case in Hamburg. One man from near Regensburg (Bavaria), and two females--one from Kulmbach (Bavaria) and one from Hamburg--tested positively for H1N1. The German media reported about several other suspicious, but unconfirmed, cases throughout the country, mainly in Bavaria and in North Rhine-Westphalia. Previous cases reported in reftel were confirmed negative for H1N1. The Transportation Ministry is taking precautionary measures at airports and Munich authorities are anticipating an arrival from Cancun, Mexico, with symptomatic passengers. The Mission Pandemic Influenza Working Group convened on 28 April and reviewed tripwires and confirmed Mission supplies. The group also discussed how to ensure information transmission to Americans in Germany in line with no-double-standard requirements. End Summary.

CONFIRMED CASES

2. (SBU) The two patients from Bavaria were in Mexico before returning to Germany with flu-like symptoms. Both went to their local doctors within a few days of their return. The woman was treated at home and has no more symptoms. All of her contacts tested negatively for the virus, including her husband, who had accompanied her on the trip to Mexico. The man in Regensburg is hospitalized. His condition is worse than that of the woman, since he has a chronic disease that may be aggravated by the flu. His contacts tested negative for H1N1 as well. Both patients are expected to recover from the virus. They are between 35 and 40 years old. The Bavarian Environment Ministry reported about several other suspicious cases which have not been confirmed to date. The confirmed case in Hamburg involved a 20 year old woman who reported to her university clinic (following travel to Mexico) with flu-like symptoms. She was isolated and being treated.

PRIOR REPORTING NOT H1N1

3. (SBU) The three suspicious cases reported in reftel involving two men who returned from a trip to Mexico with flu-like symptoms and 1 woman (the sister of one of the two men) who contracted an infection later - did not turn out to be H1N1 cases, health official said.

TRANSPORTATION PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

14. (SBU) The Transportation Ministry told the embassy on Tuesday that Germany will now apply certain precautionary measures at all airports handling incoming Mexican and U.S. flights. Carriers are now requested to distribute fliers to passengers on these flights, describing the symptoms. Travelers showing symptoms within 7 days after arrival are requested to see a doctor. If the symptoms are confirmed, the doctor is required to report the patient to RKI. Carriers have also been requested to store passenger lists for these flights for a minimum of 10 days in order to facilitate the tracing of other passengers, should it be necessary. If the illness breaks out on board, or a passenger is suspected to have it, he is to be isolated or quarantined. Other passengers on the flight will receive passenger locator cards.

INBOUND FLIGHT FROM MEXICO

15. According to the media, Germany's health official at Munich airport expects by midday a non-stop flight from Cancun, Mexico, where the pilot has given advance notice to officials that there are passengers with A/H1N1 symptoms on board. Flight no. LT 1415 (Airbus 330) has 275 passengers on board. The airplane will be brought to a separate area upon arrival at the airport; passengers with suspicious symptoms will be isolated or quarantined. In addition, Hamburg Port

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Health Authority officials have started precautionary measures at Hamburg Airport particularly with Continental Airlines and at the Hamburg harbor.

FOOD MEASURES

16. (SBU) The German Agency for Risk Assessment (BfR) has indicated that they have not detected any cases of H1N1 being contracted from food. However, BfR advises consumers to generally heat all meat products - including pork - for at least 2 minutes and to a minimum temperature of least 70 degrees Celsius to eliminate the risk of food borne illnesses caused by micro-organisms such as viruses (e.g. H1N1 & AI) and bacteria (e.g. salmonella & listeria)

17. (SBU) Germany's Under Secretary of Health, Klaus Schroeder, said yesterday in Berlin that the suspicious cases found in Germany are individual cases and not a pandemic. The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs cautioned to avoid unnecessary trips to Mexico. The German government has renamed the virus into "new flu."

MISSION ACTIONS

18. (U) The Pandemic Influenza Working Group (PIWG) met by DVC April 28. Primary task of PIWG meeting was to review local Mission tripwires for adequacy and completeness. PIWG determined that existing local tripwires were narrowly focused on avian influenza and its particular characteristics (50 percent fatality rate of H5N1, animal-to-human transmission, etc.) PIWG will revise local tripwires to reflect the apparent lower fatality rate of H1N1 and its transmission between humans. Revised tripwires will include additional coordination with military entities and local American groups, and provide clearer tripwire definitions based on Federal Government Response Stages and WHO Phases.

19. (SBU) Mission Health Unit confirmed adequate supplies of

personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles, gowns, and gloves. PIWG discussed dispensation and deployment of PPE to those with the most exposure to the public -- consular section and local guards -- for later tripwires. Health Unit also confirmed that Mission supplies of antiviral drugs were at least adequate to cover 30 percent of mission staff (local and American) and their families.

¶10. (U) To inform the public and Mission personnel, a flu section has been placed on the front page of the Mission Germany public website with links to the following: Department of Health and Human Services, pandemicflu.gov, Secretary Napolitano's press briefing on H1N1, the World Health Organization, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

¶11. (U) PIWG will work in close concert with Consular Affairs and American Citizen Services to ensure non-mission American citizens are kept abreast of developments and the no double standard policy is adhered to. ACS is drafting a Warden Message to provide guidance to private American citizens that will echo expert advice from CDC, WHO, and HHS provided on the Mission homepage.

Koenig